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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
THURSDAY, MARCH 13, 2003

THIS REPORT WILL PRESENT A TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE THEMES:

HEADLINES
BRIEFING
EDITORIAL OPINION

HEADLINES

MASS APPEALS

Bush has lost hope at UN - Turkiye
U.S. to pay wages of 2 million Iraqis - Hurriyet
EU's secret Cyprus plan - Milliyet
Ocalan trial enigma - Sabah
Ankara: ECHR's Ocalan ruling political - Turkiye
Gul reluctant to take part in new cabinet - Vatan

OPINION MAKERS

U.S. turns down Turkey's proposal for new negotiations - Zaman
Blair, too, might be out; Bush getting lonelier - Cumhuriyet
Bush loses struggle with UN - Yeni Safak
Verheugen: Cyprus will badly affect Turkey, EU ties - Radikal
Washington blames Denktas for Cyprus impasse - Cumhuriyet

FINANCIAL JOURNALS

Mardin to become UN's humanitarian operations center in war - Dunya
WB's Chibber complains about ignorance of government - Finansal Forum

BRIEFING

Iraq: Afraid of a new decree rejection by the parliament, AKP leader Erdogan is delaying the formation of a new cabinet until a UN decision on March 14. A new decree will be submitted to parliament after Erdogan's cabinet wins a vote of confidence. The AKP leadership is concerned that the party might not be able to survive a second failure on this issue. Papers claim that U.S. Ambassador Pearson told Erdogan in a recent meeting that the U.S. would need at least five years to see some progress in Iraq, and that the U.S. is planning to stay in the region for 25 years. Pearson also reportedly gave Erdogan guarantees regarding Mosul and Kirkuk. Papers think Erdogan had concerns about the military/economic deal with the U.S., but Pearson stressed that the memoranda of understanding with Turkey would not be reviewed. Papers expect Erdogan to submit his cabinet list to President Sezer not earlier than Monday. Meanwhile, about 100 protesters attempting to enter the Iskenderun port to block the transport of U.S. military equipment to the Iraqi border were dispersed by police.

Cyprus: EU expansion commissioner Verheugen has reiterated that the deadlock on the Cyprus issue would adversely affect Turkey's EU entry drive. The European Commission earlier announced that Turkey would be considered an 'occupier' on the island once the Greek Cypriots join the EU. Afraid of irreparable damage in ties with the EU, Ankara has decided to encourage Denktas to begin direct talks with the Greek Cypriots to resolve the issue. Papers expect the EU to gradually exert pressure on Turkey, and to encourage Turkish Cypriots to move to southern Cyprus after the accession protocol with the Greek Cypriots is signed on April 16. ECHR on Ocalan trial: The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) has ruled that PKK leader Ocalan's right to defense was restricted during his trial in Turkey, and that his detention period was longer than allowed by law. The court called for a retrial. The ECHR noted that the trial was unjust, and claimed that the judges were not impartial.

Turkey will appeal the ECHR decision within three months.

EDITORIAL OPINION

"The test for Erdogan"

Hasan Cemal noted in mass appeal Milliyet (3/12): "New prime minister Erdogan will go through a series of tests in coming days. These tests include the second authorization for permission to the US; relations between Turkey and the US; the economic reform program; the IMF; Cyprus; the EU, and the internal balances within the AKP. More importantly, none of the above-mentioned issues can afford to wait. . There are already worst-case scenarios circulating in the event that Turkey's relations sour with the US and the EU. Some of the scenarios are terribly pessimistic, but we should also realize that the financial markets in particular are very anxious to see two things happen immediately -an agreement with the IMF, including a budget and other related measures; and the decision to allow the authorization decree. Erdogan assumes the Prime Ministry position at the most critical stage in our recent history. The second decree should pass from parliament. Fiscal discipline should be established, with no detours into populism. The Cyprus question should also be taken up in a spirit of finding a settlement. . These are some of the major tests, and it only requires a short period of time to see whether Erdogan will pass them successfully."

"What is going on?"

Ahmet Tasgetiren argued in the Islamic-intellectual Yeni Safak (3/12): "Turkey is under attack from both the US and the EU. Despite significant differences between the US and EU on Iraq policy, they seem to be in harmony in twisting Turkey's arm. The US is "beating up" Turkey in order to get Turkey on its side in Iraq. The EU is "beating up" Turkey in order to serve Greek/Greek Cypriot interests and to undermine Turkey's EU membership prospects. . Turkey needs the US as much as the US needs Turkey, and the same is also valid for Turkish-EU relations. Yet the European stance about Turkey is fanatical, if not downright stupid. The US administration seems to be under the influence of the hawks and their conspiracies. Turkey is urgently in need of a mental awakening, and an independent policy adjustment is required."

PEARSON